

You're Home by JoMo3

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Summary:

It's been more than a year since Eleven vanished, and Mike is still missing her, though others have moved on.

1. Chapter 1

Author's Note:

So, this is my first attempt at writing a fanfic. But after reading so many great ones I was inspired to write my own 2-parter. Be gentle!

December 15, 1984

It had been a long year.

Since that night more than a year ago, a lot had changed. Will, now safe in his own dimension, would still wake in the middle of the night, screaming and terrified. Even though he was getting older, Joyce would still hold him and rock him until he fell asleep.

Dustin and Lucas hadn't changed too much, but now they were beginning to notice their female classmates more. Lucas had gone to the Snow Ball with Cynthia Miller, which the other boys had teased him about to no end. Will had gone, too, with Jennifer Hayes, after she'd begged and begged.

And Mike was the same, but....quieter. He still led campaigns, still rode bikes with the boys and worked on homework with them; but the boys all knew he missed Eleven. Even Will, who'd never really met her, knew something was off with his friend. The night of the Snow Ball, he and Dustin were watching all three Star Wars movies at Mike's and Mike just wasn't into it.

"Dude," Dustin had said, nudging his friend as Mike's favorite part in Empire Strikes Back, when Luke battled Darth Vader and lost his hand, came up. Mike, watching with his chin on his hand, smirked and kept watching.

Dustin paused the movie. "Dude," he said, again.

Mike looked confused. "What?"

"When are you going to stop moping around?"

"I'm not, I'm just...tired."

"Bullshit," Dustin exclaimed.

“What?”

“We both know this is about Eleven, Mike.”

Mike didn't have a response; instead he just looked at his feet.

“I miss her too, but you gotta move on,” Dustin said.

“Can we talk about something else?” Mike asked.

“Mike-”

“Just play the damn movie,” Mike had said, snatching up the remote and pressing play. They'd watched the rest of the movie in silence.

That very same night, Jim Hopper was doing his bi-weekly food drop off near Murkwood. After he parked, he reached into the backseat for the care package-complete with Eggos-and began the small trek into the woods. When he got to the box, he knelt down, opened the lid, and carefully put the food inside.

After closing the box, he started to get up but paused. It felt like someone was watching him. He glanced over his shoulder, and saw nothing but dark woods. Looking in front of him revealed more of the same.

He knew it couldn't be the people from Hawkins Lab, he'd stuck by his deal, and so far, so had they. He didn't think anyone had followed him, though he couldn't be sure.

Sighing, he stood up, lit a cigarette, and looked around him one more time. Nothing. Chuckling at his paranoia, he made his way back to his truck. As he started the car, he started thinking about what he'd do for himself for dinner. He was just about to pull onto the road when he saw her.

Coming out of the woods, still wearing his flannel shirt from almost a year ago, was the little girl. She clutched it to herself so tightly he thought she would break.

Quickly getting out of the truck, he ran to her, taking off his parka and wrapped it around her, then picked her up in almost the same motion.

“Let's get you warm,” he told her, carrying her to the truck.

He laid her down in the backseat, where he had an extra blanket that he wrapped around her shaking legs.

“You alright, kid?” he asked her.

She looked back at him, her brown eyes meeting his blue ones, and stammered “Th...th...thank...y..you.”

"Don't go thanking me yet, kid," he said as he climbed back into the front seat. Putting the truck into gear, he drove off into the night.

December 16, 1984

Will was the first of the boys to find out.

Hopper had called Joyce the next morning, asking for some clothes and help.

He had tried to be vague, but after awhile had just said "The girl. The one from last year with the shaved head; I've got her, okay?"

Joyce had immediately told her youngest son to contact Mike and ask for some of Nancy's old clothes.

"For what?," Will had asked.

"Just...tell Mike that Eleven is back."

Will's eyes had widened, and he nodded his head and grabbed his Supercom.

"Mike! Mike, come in!"

There was nothing, then Mike's voice: "What?"

"She's back!"

"Who? What're you talking about? Over."

"That girl...Eleven. She's back! Over."

"What're you....what? Uh, over."

"Eleven. She's back. My mom needs some of Nancy's old clothes. Now! Over."

Nothing again, then "Did Dustin put you up to this? Because if he did..."

Will cut him off. "Get over here, now! Over and out!"

Mike had never pedaled his bike so fast in his life. Despite the light snow on the ground, he was over to the Beyers in record time.

Joyce drove the two boys over to Hopper's. In his excitement, Mike had forgotten to get some of Nancy's old clothes, so Will had volunteered some of his.

As they pulled up to Hopper's trailer, Mike could feel his heart beating out of his chest. Was this for real? Was this really happening?

As they climbed out of the car, Hopper opened his front door. "What took you?"

Joyce waved him off. "Where is she?"

Hopper led them inside. On the couch, snuggled up tightly in a blanket, was Eleven, dozing.

Mike's jaw dropped. He couldn't believe that after all this time, she was here. Her hair had grown some, now it was a little past her ears. But it was still the Eleven he remembered.

Joyce knelt in front of the girl, feeling her forehead. "She's burning up," she said, looking at Hopper.

"I know," he said. "I've been trying like crazy to cool her down." He walked into his kitchen, Joyce following him. Will tugged on Mike's arm, pulling him with them.

The two adults and Will sat at the table. At first, Mike stood where he could still see Eleven, but after Joyce assured him that she'd be okay, he joined them at the table.

Hopper wouldn't go into details about where she'd been or how he'd gotten her back, no matter how much they pleaded. All he told them was she'd been sleeping off and on since he brought her home last night, and hadn't said much besides "cold" and "bathroom" and "Eggos."

"Where's she going to stay?" asked Joyce.

"She's staying with me," Hopper said.

"But..." Joyce began.

"But what?"

"With your job, and your...manner of living, don't think she'd be better off...I don't know, with someone else?"

"Like who?"

"She could stay with me," Mike said, finally breaking his silence.

The adults looked at him.

"I told her, uh, before, she could stay me," he said.

Joyce patted his hand. "Mike, sweetie, that was very kind of you, but your mother already has 3 kids."

"And you have two," Hopper said.

"Mike?," a quiet voice called.

Mike jumped a little, startled. All eyes turned to the doorway where Eleven stood, holding the blanket around her.

"El," he said, getting up. He rushed over, and pulled her close to him, hugging her.

"Mike, not so tight," Joyce told him.

But he didn't listen, he continued his tight hug. Eleven nestled her head into his shoulder, and repeated his name: "Mike."
"You're home," Mike said. "You're home."

2. Chapter 2

Mike took Eleven back to the couch, with Will following them. Still at the table, Joyce turned to Hopper.

"She needs to stay with me," she told him. "She needs a mother."

"Joyce, it's my fault," he told her, shaking his head.

"What?"

"I sold her out. What happened with her, it's...it's my fault. If I hadn't..."

"Then we wouldn't have gotten Will," Joyce said.

"I need to do this," Hopper said. And Joyce knew from his tone that he'd made his decision.

In the next room, Mike was introducing Eleven to Will. After greeting each other, Will said "I'm going to see if I can get Dustin and Lucas over here." He left the room to see if he could use Hopper's phone.

Immediately, Mike scooted closer to Eleven. Taking her hand, he asked her if she was okay.

She nodded her head, and whispered "Sorry."

Mike looked confused. "What're you sorry for?"

"Leaving."

Mike shook his head. "Don't worry about that. You're back now, that's all that matters, okay?" He swallowed nervously. "El, I....I missed you."

She smiled, and nodded her head. "I missed you too."

Mike bit his tongue. He wanted to tell her he really missed her, and that life wasn't the same without her there, but he decided against it, not wanting to come off as clingy.

Pretty soon Lucas and Dustin came over, and they both ran over to Eleven, wrapping her in a big hug. The kids spent the rest of the afternoon chatting in Hopper's living room while he and Joyce smoked cigarettes in the kitchen and talked about how to handle this Eleven situation.

With the boys, Eleven didn't talk much, mostly smiling and giggling when one of them would say something funny. From time to time she would rest her head on Mike's shoulder.

When it started to get dark outside Joyce told the boys that El needed a shower and rest and that they could see her later.

Before they all left, and given El another hug, she softly gripped Mike's hand.

"Tomorrow?" she asked him.

"Tomorrow. Promise."

She smiled, and he said a quiet goodbye.

That night, El fell asleep thinking about that week before she'd gone to the Upside Down. Riding bikes, sitting in Mike's dad's comfy chair, eating Eggos. She also thought of the last night, when Mike had put his mouth on hers. She smiled a little, thinking about that particular memory. Pretty soon she fell into a deep sleep.

December 17, 1984

Karen Wheeler had noticed a big attitude change in her son since he'd gotten home last night. Gone was the quiet, sullen, preteen; back was her smiling, energetic, happy young man.

"Mom! I'm going over to Will's!" he shouted as he ran out the door.

"Okay," she called back, smiling.

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Joyce had talked Hopper into letting El stay with her when he had to work and she or Jonathan would be home. While she waited for

Mike, she and Will were drawing at the kitchen table while Joyce cleaned up in the kitchen.

“You came back at a good time,” Will told her. “It’s almost Christmas.”

She looked at him, confused. “Christmas?”

“You don’t know Christmas?”

She shook her head.

“It’s a really cool holiday, you get presents and stuff.”

“Presents?”

“Like toys and video games and things like that. People get them for you, wrap them up, and you open them on Christmas. I’ve already finished buying mine.”

“Does Mike do Christmas?”

“Yeah. I got him a video game. But don’t tell him.”

El started thinking. Should she get a present for Mike?

A few minutes later Mike arrived. He gave El a smile as he sat next to her at the table.

“Mike?,” she asked in her quiet voice.

“What’s up, El?”

“Christmas?”

His face lit up. “Yeah, it’s next week. I’ve gotta finish getting people gifts, actually.”

“Can I do Christmas?”

“Yeah! I forgot, you didn’t have....” he trailed off, not really wanting to bring up how she didn’t have holidays in her previous life.

“Can I get you a present?”

He nodded his head. “Yeah, and I can get you one, too.”

She smiled, nodding her head. “Good.”

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The next week was more fun times with El and the boys. With El having no idea what winter was, the boys showed her how to build a snowman, what a snowball fight was, and what sledding was.

Mike had taken her to a steep hill in the park. Looking down, she wasn't sure she wanted to sled anymore.

Tugging on his coat, she asked “Mike?”

“Yeah?,” he asked, pointing the sled downhill.

“Sledding, is it fun?”

“Really fun!” He saw the nervous look on her face. “We don't have to, if you don't want to.”

“No, we can.” She climbed onto the sled, and he climbed on in front of her.

“Are you sure?”

She nodded her head.

He scooted the sled to the end, and they went careening down the hill.

El wrapped her arms around Mike's waist and, for the first time ever, Mike heard her scream in excitement.

When they got to the bottom, he turned to her. She was smiling from ear to ear; “Again?”

So they went up and down the hill three more times.

After the third time, as they prepared to head home, she wrapped

him in a hug. "Thank you, Mike."

He nervously hugged her back. "For what?"

"For showing me sledding. And for being my friend."

Mike hugged her a little tighter. "Thank you for coming back, El."

They pulled apart, and were both blushing. Mike was very tempted to kiss her, but decided now was not the time.

December 23, 1984

Here it was, two days before Christmas, and El still needed to get a gift for Mike. In the morning she walked into Hopper's kitchen where he sat, eating Corn Flakes and reading the newspaper, and said "Present."

Hopper looked up from the paper. "Huh?"

"I want to get a present. For Mike."

"Is that right?," Hopper asked, closing the paper. "And what did you have in mind?"

She shrugged her shoulders. "I don't know. Do you?"

Hopper smiled. "No, Ellie, I don't. Why don't I drop you off with Joyce while I go to work; and when I pick you up, maybe you'll have thought of something. Okay?"

She nodded her head, and ran off to get dressed.

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At the Beyers home, Eleven asked Will for ideas on what to get Mike. "Video games. And books. Oh, and comic books! I know there was one he lost from Dustin a few weeks ago, um....X Men 143! He might like it if he got that one back."

El nodded, happy that she had an idea. Which was perfect timing, because minutes later Mike, Dustin, and Lucas came over, ready to

play in the snow.

December 25, 1984

El enjoyed her first Christmas. Hopper had gotten a small tree to put in his trailer, and she had received a few gifts; from Hopper she got a doll and a bike; Joyce got her two dresses to wear; Will gave her another doll; and Dustin and Lucas gave her Eggos and a book, respectively.

The Wheelers were having a Christmas party, and Mike had told her he'd give her his gift at his home.

So Christmas night she put on one of her new dresses and climbed into Hopper's truck and they drove to the Wheelers house.

They were greeted with a "Merry Christmas!" as they entered the house.

Eleven looked to Hopper. "Merry Christmas?"

"It means have a good Christmas, Ellie."

The boys rushed over, eager to ask what presents she got and to tell her what they'd received.

Mike took her hand and led her into the basement. On the way down, behind the other boys, he whispered "You look pretty, El."

She blushed. "Thank you."

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The boys and El spent the evening laughing and playing video games in the basement; every so often El would catch Mike looking at her, and they would smile shyly at one another.

After a few hours, people started trickling home. Lucas was the first to leave, with Will and his family leaving soon after. Dustin left next. Hopper was eager to leave, being uncomfortable in social situations like these in the first place, but he'd promised El they could stay a little later so she could give Mike his present.

Finally, El came up to Mike while he sat on the couch, looking at a book.

“Mike?”

He looked up. “Yeah?”

“Here.” She handed him a crudely wrapped gift. “Present.”

He looked at it curiously as she sat next to him. Tearing it open, he smiled at the cover of X Men 143. “Cool! I’ve been wanting this one! Thanks, El!”

She smiled, happy that she had made him happy.

“Um,” he said, reaching over the side of the couch. “I didn’t have time to wrap it, but....here.”

He brought over a Supercom. Her eyes went wide.

“I figure you might want your own. This way, we can talk whenever we want.”

El smiled at him. “Thank you, Mike.”

The two sat in silence for a minute, enjoying each other’s presence and presents. After a while, Mike decided to break the silence.

“El?”

“Yes?”

“I’m happy you’re back home.”

She smiled. “Me too.”

Then he mustered up his courage, and did what he’d been wanting to do since she came back; he leaned over and kissed her softly on her lips. This kiss had a little more into it than their last, and El somehow knew to kiss back this time. After about five seconds they pulled apart, and neither was surprised to see they were now holding hands and blushing.

“Merry Christmas, Mike,” El said softly.

“Merry Christmas, El,” he told her.

Author's Note:

I hope you liked it. Kudos & comments are appreciated. Happy Holidays, everyone.